

# **SOCAL ASL COUNTERS ITALIAN THREAT**

## **CHALLENGES SONS OF ROMULUS FOR VASL WORLD DOMINATION !!**

**Southern California** — In news that has shocked the international VASL community, players throughout Southern California have rallied to counter the threat posed by a rancorous set of Italian players who are alleged to have made disparaging remarks about West Coast ASLers. A partial transcript of the discussion was posted to the ASLML (see next page). “Clearly, the Italians pose a clear and present danger to our ongoing domination of VASL!” stated Robert F, self-proclaimed leader of the SoCal ASL VASL strike force assembled in response to the Italian posturing. He further elaborated that “we could field VASL banter within 45 minutes of giving the order!”

The Italians all but confirmed their global aspirations in short order. “Can’t you all hear the chimes of glory sounding the time for us, we Italian Heroes, to stand up and gain our place into world ASL domination?” responded Neuro “don’t whine, drink wine” Niky, leader of the Italians. “Are we going to leave these Californian guys take our women? Like they’d know what to do with our women! Drink our wine? Like they’d know how to drink real wine, like real men! Punch our counters when finally AoO comes out? No! It’s time we join arms and start preparing for WAR!”

A SoCal ASL member, speaking on condition of anonymity, added “This is just another opportunity for the greatest ASL club in the known universe to show the rest of the world how things are supposed to be done. Remember those boisterous Colorado Dogs? After the VASL pounding we barely managed to hand them, they’ve not been woofing in our direction, have they? World domination will soon be ours, although we’ll have to share it with the oil companies.”

No fewer than eleven Italian VASL players came for-



*The Los Angeles Times article that first broke the story....*

ward to pit their ASL skills against the SoCal ASL club members. Responding in kind, SoCal ASL fielded eleven of their most skilled, experienced and/or odiferous members to defend their club’s place in the global VASL hierarchy. Skill levels were across the spectrum, including hardened Play-by-Email VASL grognards, ASL newbies, and ASL veterans that had never tried VASL. All participants rated themselves in ASL skill and experience. Players were then ranked and paired, and much whining ensued. VASL setup tips and tricks were shared with friends and foes alike, and soon everyone was dangerously semi-competent and ready to proceed. So it was that the SoCal ASL vs. Italian VASL tournament officially came to life on 28 May 2003.

The tournament is expected to last almost a year — watch for updates in the next few issues of **Hit The Beach!** Meanwhile, take a look at the Official Match-Up Listing (see next page) for all the competitors and the Featured Match-Ups (you’ll find them) for four of our VASL warriors.

And the next time you see one of the players listed in the match-ups, remember to buy ‘em a beer... They’re fighting to preserve your bragging rights!

*This **BREAKING NEWS ULTRA SPECIAL REPORT OF URGENCY** brought to you by:*

**Rae’s Bongs and Boogie-Boards of Laguna Nigel** *Hit The Beach!* *I Miei Piccoli Amici’ Suppositories da Torino*

....**BREAKING NEWS....BREAKING NEWS....**

# SOCAL ASL COUNTERS ITALIAN THREAT

## *Transcript of the Alleged Discussion on VASL*

<TorinoBoy> - Il pappagallo. Era il pappagallo! Carina, no?  
<Gelato> - Mah, io non l'ho capita... secondo me faceva cagare...  
<Italy4Me> - Ciao raga, tutto rego? :)  
<Gelato> - Ciao Italy4Me  
<TorinoBoy> - Mah, il pappagallo..., e cosa c'entra il pappagallo?  
<Italy4Me> - Ma non siete anche voi stufi di 'sti californiani su VASL?  
<TorinoBoy> - Perché, scusa?  
<Italy4Me> - Beh, perché noi almeno giochiamo un po' rilassati,  
<Italy4Me> - magari con una bella birretta in mano e senza ricordarci la metà del regolamento...  
<Italy4Me> - Loro invece passano la giornata a lamentarsi, e poi lamentarsi, e poi lamentarsi...  
<Italy4Me> - non c'è paragone. Io me li sto spappando a furia di lamentele sull'IIFT,  
<Italy4Me> - il bypass in edifici fortificati etc.  
<EscaDeiSniper> - Che hai da dire sull'IIFT?  
<Italy4Me> - Miscredenti! Solo l'IIFT è la vera via!  
\*\*\* DR = 5,6 \*\*\* <Italy4Me>  
<SoCalSon> - Ha ha - Dicebot says "Not funny"  
<TorinoBoy> - ?  
<Italy4Me> - Hi SoCalRun...  
<SoCalSon> - that's what you get for calling us whiners!

<Italy4Me> - we not seen you to enter  
<TorinoBoy> - we meant wieners  
<SoCalSon> - And there's nothing wrong with the IIFT, period!  
<iLoveLA> - Hi SoCalSon.  
<iLoveLA> - They have been yammering for hours!  
<Italy4Me> - capite l'italiano?  
<SoCalSon> - Ever hear of <http://babblefish.altavista.com>?  
<SoCalSon> - I got one for ya!  
<SoCalSon> - ...hold on...  
<SoCalSon> - What is the shortest book in the world?  
<SoCalSon> - Che cosa è il libro più corto nel mondo? (+/-)  
<EscaDeiSniper> - Diplomazia americana?  
<Italy4Me> - Hahaha - funny very funny.  
<SoCalSon> - Grrr....  
> \*\*\* DR = 3,2 \*\*\* <EscaDeiSniper>  
<Italy4Me> - there you see  
<SoCalSon> - OK, you got me there...  
<SoCalSon> - What is the most popular ASL scenario in Italy?  
<SoCalSon> - "Ci Arrendiamo"  
<iLoveLA> - I get it! "I surrender"! LOL!  
> \*\*\* DR = 1,2 \*\*\* <iLoveLA>  
<iLoveLA> - Looks like the Pasta Eroicos lost that one.  
<TorinoBoy> - That is no so funny as us. Spiacente.  
<Gelato> - Yes, and I make a new joke at you  
<iLoveLA> - Bring it on...

## SoCal ASL vs. Italy VASL World Domination Tournament Official Scenario Match-Up Listing

SoCalASL Player	Italian Player	Scenario	SoCal Side	Italy Side
Robert Feinstein	Luca Martini	Last Stop Sened [TAC71]	Americans	Italians/Germans
Scott Thompson	Peter Rogneholt*	Pride and Joy [ASL90]	Greeks	Italians
Matt Romey	Fabio Mazzuchelli	North Bank [A38]	Germans	British
Fred Timm	Andrea Fantozzi	Retribution [ASL55]	Americans	Italians
Eric Johnson	Mario Nadalini	Tretten in Flames [J37]	Germans	British
Chas Argent	Sergio Puzziello	Beachhead at Ozereyka Bay [A26]	Russian	Axis
Ron Mosher	Nicolò Blotto	Grebbe End [J42]	German	Dutch
Dave Myers	Nicola Marangon	Retribution [ASL55]	Americans	Italians
David Nicholas	Stefano Marian	Ambush! [ASL28]	Axis	Allied
Sean Geraghty	Marco Merli	Dreil Team [A37]	German	British
Stance Nixon	Bruno Bono	Confusion Reigns [ASL12]	Americans	German

\*Commissar Rogneholt of Sweden is an honorary member of the Italian team.

## SoCal ASL vs. Italy VASL World Domination Tournament

### Featured Match-Ups



#### VASL Match-Up #1

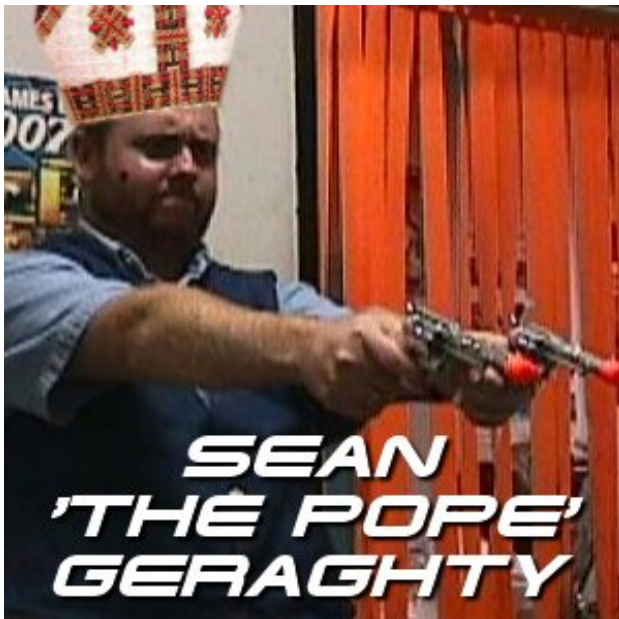
Eric  
Johnson

vs.

Mario  
Nadalini



Name: Mario Nadalini (25 years)  
VASL Tag: "Gheba"  
Residence: Baselga di Pinè, Trentino Province,  
northern Italy  
Place of Birth: Trento (old Roman Tridentum)  
Occupation: Student (Theoretical Physics)  
Family: Girlfriend named Alberta  
SL/ASL Experience: 9 years



#### VASL Match-Up #2

Sean  
Geraghty

vs.

Marco  
Merli



Name: Marco Merli (38 years)  
VASL name: "Marco M."  
Residence: Ferrara  
Place of Birth: Ferrara  
Occupation: Analyst - Programmer and Project  
Manager  
Family: Married  
SL/ASL Experience: 1 year

**....THIS HAS BEEN A BREAKING NEWS ULTRA SPECIAL REPORT OF URGENCY...**



# Hit The Beach!

## The Southern California ASL Club Newsletter



September 2003 Volume 8 Number 3

### The President's Corner

by Jim Aikens

During my summer vacation I read The Devil in the White City, a book about the building of the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. It's a great book about the second largest city in America stepping up and taking its place as a leader of culture, growth, development and innovation. The Chicago World's Fair of 1893 serves as the centerpiece of Chicago's emergence as one of the great cities of America. I was thinking about what SoCal ASL has managed to accomplish over the past few years and I realized that we, like Chicago, have grown into something special...something impressive.

I want you to think back 3 - 4 years. The top 3 ASL-related Web Sites were Coastal Fortress, ASL Crossroads and the ASL Bulletin Board...and where are they \*all\* now? Part of SoCal ASL's Web Site (thank you Paul!). I can't emphasize how important our Web Site is to our identity in the ASL community. Our hobby is flourishing in the electronic age. ASLers are computer users. Even the relative Luddites among us have come to regard the internet as their primary source of information. That means when people are looking for something to do with ASL these days, they're spending a lot of time on our website.

Now think about West Coast Melee. I think we give WCM attendees just as much bang-for-the-buck as ASLOK, the ASL Open or Winter Offensive in terms of variety of programs we offer, the organization, the facility, etc. Those 3 may have the advantage of numbers due to their location but \*nobody\* has ever said "gee, too bad WCM doesn't offer...". In fact, we've been on the cutting edge of the national tournament scene with our premium location, our free food and beverage hospitality suite and our dedicated event-long program for new play-



(Continued on page 14)

### Marching Orders

by Matt Cicero

Summer is ending and we managed another terrific One Day event at Biola. Folks had a great time at our usual summer venue and from my point of view, the "Band of Brothers" showing was a great touch. We should require all of our members who donate their house to a One-Day event to purchase a 6-foot screen so we can watch war flicks during play...I'm sure Jim will be happy to explain things to your wives and girlfriends....

This issue's *BREAKING NEWS* report was the brainchild of our very own provocateur, Robert Feinstein. Robert has been working overtime to keep our intercontinental VASL competition moving along. This is our second "VASL Challenge" and we hope it won't be our last. Congrats to everyone (Italian and So-Cal) willing to jump on board and make this event fun and exciting.

Our *Roll Call!* victim this month is Regional Director Emeritus Rob Stai. Thanks for the great interview, Rob!

We have two features this month. First, Matt Romey, VASL Addict Extraordinaire, has pulled together the best VASL Installation Guide ever so everyone can get up and running. Second, I prattle on about what I think makes great scenarios great. I'm hoping to generate a little feedback...

We round out this issue with our usual Book Review, *SWEET!* - *OUCH!* and *Did You Know?* features. Oh, most importantly, send me an email if you or anyone you knows starts up a game of The Rock.

As always, please consider writing an article for a future issue. See you at Jim's in November!

Editor@socalasl.com



## The Dog Days of Summer One Day Event AAR

by Jim Aikens

Congratulations Steve Treatman, winner of this year's Dog Days of Summer 'DCs In the House' One Day Event! Steve stood 'em up and knocked 'em down, managing to beat off Fred Timm in the wee hours of the morning for the big win. Way to go!

We had a solid showing of 16 members in attendance. A lot of players opted to playtest scenarios for our up-coming Melee Pack II instead of competing in the second round of the DC-theme tournament. I think that speaks volumes both to the quality of the scenario submissions we've had for MP11, and the enthusiasm our Club has for the playtest work necessary to see them published. I saw some very cool stuff being played. MP11 will be an exciting, worthy successor to our first Melee Pack. I personally got a chance to play Robert Feinstein's new scenario "Crater Lake", which features (count 'em) \*three\* AVRE tanks. Way cool.

I want to extend congratulations to one of our newest members, Ed Kemp, who played his first two official ASL scenarios yesterday. He's been working with Don Petros every week, learning the system, and is a regular observer at my Thursday night CG sessions. Obviously he's been paying attention.

Another highlight yesterday was Paul

Simonsen projecting episodes of "Band of Brothers" onto a six-foot movie screen in the room while we were playing. Most of the members are big fans of this series and there were times when everyone stopped playing to watch a particular battle scene. It was definitely an enhancement to our gaming experience.

Of course, because we were at Biola, we had to trade off a large, air-conditioned room for an inability to serve some type of food (and beer). But I'm happy to report that with all the restaurants in the area, no member starved. And the Club provided unlimited soda, juice and water from Matt Cicero's "big-blue" cooler.

On behalf of the Club I want to thank Paul Simonsen for arranging our location and serving as host. I also want to extend my personal thanks to Matt Cicero, Matt Romey, Rob Feinstein and Scott Thompson, who worked hard and fast to pull this together. Team-work at its best. Thanks also to the members who came, played, and supported this event.



## Playtests To The Left of Me...

We are trying our best to pack in the fun-fun this year so hang on to your hat...

Over the next month or so, each of our glorious Regional Directors will be working hard to organize a Playtest Day near you! That's right, we've decided to pull out the stops and get Melee Pack II finished off early. To do that, we are organizing a Playtest Day in each region of the Club.

We'll do our best to spread them out a bit...we know some of you are extremely enthusiastic and just might try to go to more than one event. Great!! Even if you aren't one of the devoted (disturbed?), setting up a game at one of the locations will be a lot of fun.

The Club will help out the organizers with a little beverage money as a thank you for giving up your homes for an afternoon. As this issue goes to press, it looks like Bryan Earll will be hosting on October 4 in the north, Scott Thompson will host in the "middle" and Robert Feinstein will organize the south. Middle and south are still organizing dates. We'll post final details, time and place to the website in short order.

So get fired up and start looking over those scenarios in the playtest team's Yahoo Group files. There are a lot of great scenarios brewing...come on out and help polish them up for Melee Pack II.

## Who Will Be The Biggest of the Big Men This Fall ?!?

Next up on our One Day schedule is the November 15 "Big Men On Campus Hoorah Event" in downtown Escondido (Jim Aikens has once again opened up his office for the Club). That's right, folks, every scenario will feature at least one of your favorite 10-3 counters (10-2, if you are of the Japanese persuasion!) Just think, stone buildings don't exist! As with our Summer One Day, we'll be having a two-round tournament. Losers from the first round can gather and sulk or maybe pick up a playtest game before dinner.

And speaking of food...the Club will be sponsoring a tub of drinks as usual. Even better, the Club will be sponsoring a Beer and Pizza Fest at Filippi's for dinner! As always, bring your favorite chair. Please also remember that there is no One Day fee for members and a modest \$5 for guests. Directions and contact info will be posted on the website.

*See you there!!*

# Roll Call ! ...Rob Stai !

## HTB!: Where are you from? Any military experience?

RS: Southern California, born and raised...one of the few natives. Military experience...five years teaching in L.A. At least, it feels like a war zone!

## HTB!: What got you started with ASL? When?

RS: I've been playing wargames for most of my life (I first played *Stalin-grad* when I was 5). I played original SL and all its modules when they came out. I resisted looking into ASL for years (what do you mean it's 45 dollars...for just the rule book?!) Finally (1990? 1991? somewhere in there), during a summer when no good games seemed to be hitting the market, and after much needling by Dave Rosner, I decided to pick it up and give it a try. I set up a couple of scenarios solo to push the counters around a little and got hooked!

## HTB!: How did you learn the game?

RS: Right after I purchased the rulebook (and in short order, all the available modules), I got a job installing new computerized register systems and training the employees how to use them. This gave me lots of time where I would be just sitting around waiting for something to do. So I would take the rulebook along with me, and just began reading. Dave and I were able to get a lot of playing time in and I began to play in the tournaments at the Strategicon conventions, where I learned a lot, not only about tactics, but about how to run a tournament. It wasn't long before I was running a few tournaments and dabbling in scenario design

## HTB!: Why do you like ASL over other leisure activities?

RS: What I like most about the game is its infinite variety, the fact that any battle, in any theater of WWII (or even other conflicts) can be recreated. I particularly like the more esoteric possibilities (minor theaters, Korean War, Spanish Civil War...even a little South American jungle fighting [shameless plug]). ASL also provides a great social and intellectual environment. Every module, every article, every scenario helps me learn something new, both about the game, and about the history behind the game. And playing ASL has helped me make friendships with a great group of people.

## HTB!: How do you like to play ASL? FtF, Tournneys, VASL...

RS: FtF is really the only way to go for me. The social aspect of the game is extremely important for me. There's nothing like seeing the look on my opponent's face when a critical hit puts an end to the last Panther. I've tried VASL, I think it's a remarkable program, it has a lot of advantages...but I just don't get the same gaming experience as I do from a FtF game. Tournneys can be a blast. It's great fun catching up with friends you haven't seen in 3 months (or more). But there's a part of me that's almost relieved when I've lost enough games in a tourney, so I can play a pick up game of whatever scenario I like, against whoever I feel like playing

## HTB!: Do you like to play Fast? Slow? Medium?

RS: I tend to be a fast player. I don't spend a lot of time figuring out each move, it's more of a seat-of-your-pants style. Yes it can lead to some errors in tactics, but it can also keep an opponent on his toes, forcing him into a mistake. It also helps get more games in!

## HTB!: How often do you get to play?

RS: Last year I went absolutely gonzo! I think by the time WCM rolled around, I had averaged better than a game a week. Admittedly, not having a wife and kids allows one much more gaming time. This year, I have been having more trouble getting games set up with my regular victims...um, opponents, so I've only played a few times since WCM. But I recently moved into a new apartment in Monrovia, which I hope to turn into an ASL hub. So, if you ever have a weekend day free, email me a chal-

lenge...

## HTB!: Let's talk about some of your favorites in ASL...

### Favorite vehicle?

RS: I have a very unusual favorite, one that I first used in the scenario "3rd RTR in the Rain [J43]"...the British A9 cruiser tank. Yes, it has an AF of "1". Yes, it has a red movement allowance. But it also has 14 factors of machine guns! The potential of a 25 point overrun should make any opponent think twice about leaving infantry in an exposed position! After that, my favorite vehicles are those that rarely get used. There are so many vehicles in chapter H, but it seems like new scenarios keep reusing the same old Panthers, Shermans, and Pz IVs. Scenario designers: how about some scenarios with the GAZ-4M-AA, the Grant (a much underused vehicle, in my opinion), the Archer or the Deacon?

### Favorite nationality?

RS: That's such a hard question to answer. I can appreciate the advantages of each nationality. The Japanese for their hard-to-stop troops. The British for their lack of cowering (I'm always rolling doubles). The Italians for their...ok, never mind. If I had to pick one favorite, I would probably have to say the Americans. My troops will always break anyway, so I might as well have ones that rally quickly. They usually have a good assortment of SWs and other toys. And all of their squads have assault fire and SMOKE grenades, allowing for good use of "amoeba" attacks.

### Favorite troop type?

RS: Well, since all my troops will fail a morale check at the earliest opportunity, I might as well have an army of green/conscripts. At least I'll have a hoard of them!

### Favorite theater of war?

RS: I love PTO! PTO scenarios offer so many opportunities for ambushes, hidden traps and the like. The scenarios often have a chess-like quality to them. But I also enjoy scenarios from any "unusual" theaters. Any excuse to match up two nationalities that would not otherwise fight each other. I'm still looking for a situation where I can match up Americans against British. (*Training exercise in England? -ed.*)

### Favorite tactical situation? Why?

RS: I know most players prefer to be the attacker in a scenario, but I prefer defense. I feel it gives me more chances to outsmart my opponent, rather than just overwhelming or out-rolling him.

### Favorite scenarios? Ok, list your Dogs, too...

RS: Favorites: (in no particular order) "The Island [AD4]" (British vs. Germans, deluxe boards). "End of the Ninth [ASL76]" (9 French leaders, 5, squads, lots of fun). "KP 167 [ASL70]" (a good early war US vs Japanese). "The Rock [ASL68]" (another good US/Japanese showdown). "Last Of Their Strength [A83]" (US/Japanese...I said I like PTO!). "White Tigers [A47]" (Brits/Japanese, lots of rain, lots of mud, lots of action). "3rd RTR in the Rain [J43]" (Brits/Germans...early war, with the A9 overrun machine!)

Dogs: "The Last Roadblock [J45]" (Brits/Vichy....don't see how the French can win). "Monastery Hill [A14]" (Italians and Greeks....I can see why the Italians lost this one historically). "Counterattack at Sidi Bou Zid [A20]" (US/Germans....I call this "Turkeyshoot at Sidi Bou Zid")....and any other scenario I've never won!

### Favorite product produced to date? Why?

RS: After much thought, I would have to go with *Code of Bushido*. The addition of the Japanese and PTO, to the ASL system really brings a whole new dimension to the game. *Melee Pack I* was a close second.

(Continued on page 14)



Rob enjoying a little DY0...



# The Makings of a Classic

by Matt Cicero

The ASL faithful receive a constant stream of new scenarios every year. Some scenarios become Instant Classics and some become, well, binder-filler. So what makes a Classic a Classic? 10 players will give you 10 different answers to that question. Since I happen to have your attention, I thought I'd share my ideas and maybe give you something to think about the next time you design a scenario.

## Scenario Design

Since there are so many methods for designing scenarios, I'll leave that bit of "science" out of this article. Instead, I'll concentrate on those characteristics that I feel set the great scenarios apart from all others. For each characteristic, I've given a brief description followed by some specific examples.

## Maneuvering Room

Static defenses and point-blank engagements can be fun. However, a scenario which gives players the opportunity to be more mobile, more maneuverable during play, provides far more tactical flexibility and therefore a higher level of excitement and challenge. Players will jump at a scenario that gives them lots of options for deployment and redeployment, full use of their units' capabilities (especially vehicles) and more avenues than one to approach (or protect!) their objectives. In fact, not only does a scenario involving maneuver require players to answer the question of "when" to maneuver (ex: shoot one more time or retreat to the next line of buildings), it also asks "how" (ex: should I try for SMOKE? Dash? Bypass? Doubletime? Assault Move? Who moves in what order? When should I use a HS? Do leaders need to help anyone get somewhere?)

## Defenders

Add in reinforcement groups or reserves that can be entered/shifted into the line where they are needed most. Use terrain, fortifications and/or transports to allow defenders to reposition units...a single halftrack might enable a key AT gun to be moved to a better position mid-game, for example.

## Attackers

Utilize a playing area that permits multiple avenues of attack. A nice trick to try is to allow the attacker to enter the playing area (or to set up) along two board edges. Maybe mount up some troops...even a token force can really change the complexity of the situation. How about some SMOKE rounds to make that big open space crossable...and thereby open up another potential attack route.

## General

Pick your map carefully...too much dense terrain slows movement to a crawl but too much open terrain makes it very painful to advance against fire. Also remember that OBA will slow down movement...this can be fine on a large playing area and stifling on a half-board.

## Scenario Samples:

These scenarios all feature significant maneuvering for each

side..."Smashing the 3<sup>d</sup> [J24]", "Hill 621 [E]" and "For Honor Alone [ASL82]".

## The Sacred ZING!

I'm sure you've experienced it...you're reading a novel or magazine and suddenly *Zing!* a burst of inspiration! A scenario idea! Maybe it's a terrain feature or maybe it's the forces involved or maybe it's just the weather...but you see it clear a day. As you build your scenario with this special something, make sure you stay true to it. The more you move away from the *Zing!* that inspired the scenario, the more you move away from a Classic. Why? Because it is the inspiration that often contains the elements that set a scenario apart from its peers. It is often the inspiration that translates into interesting tactical situations, seldomly used units, challenging terrain and snazzy special rules. Keep an eye on your *Zing!* and make sure that playtesting doesn't leach out your inspiration in its mad dash to achieve balance and fair play.

Of course there is a very important caveat to "keep sacred the *Zing!*" and that is: don't hinge victory on any single element or Harsh Mistress Luck will make hash of your scenario. OBA will red card out, rain will stop, NVR will drop to zero and tanks will break their MAs.

## Infantry Extremes

You can find that unique something just by making some sexy infantry choices. How many scenarios feature German 467s or Russian 447s? Why not give infantry extremes a try? Load up an attack force with a bunch of Green or Conscript troops. Give the Germans a company of full-on loaded-for-bear 838 Assault Engineers. Or maybe you can use the tried and true 1<sup>st</sup>-liners...but with an ELR of 1.

## Non-Traditional Roles

One of the reasons "Zon with the Wind [A32]" is so exciting is the tactical challenge of two big 88L guns holding off all that Ami infantry (rather than the usual horde of Russian tanks!). One of the reasons it is a Classic is the fact that there are two guns rather than one. Losing one won't lose you the game...it is less critical relative to the rest of the OB and THAT helps make this scenario a gem. Other possible examples of this idea include non-Germans with PFs, starting a scenario with fanatic troops and using Dust in a non-desert scenario.

## Interesting Units

The easiest way to make something different, unique and special is to toss in a little chrome. Flamethrowing tanks, Goliaths, guns with canister, air support with napalm, daisy chains....the list is endless. Another interesting approach is to include some rarely used vehicles and/or guns such as the Russian 37L AA Gun, the American "Aunt Jemima" and the glorious Italian Semovente M41/M da 90/53.

## Challenging Terrain

The playing area you choose can be a very impressive element that sets your scenario apart. Think about unusual uses for the same old boards. Don't like desert scenarios? How

(Continued on page 8)

(“Instant Classic” Continued from page 7)

about using those desert boards as steppe terrain. Or maybe those hills just became valleys. What about taking a woods-heavy board and converting all the woods into brush. How about isolating some of the terrific terrain on one of the many HASL maps? There are some nice villages to choose from on the KGP and Pegasus Bridge maps. There are some great cityscapes in RB and ABtF.

#### Snazzy Special Rules

Special rules are the two-edged sword of scenarios. They can add just the right touch of excitement and challenge to make it great...or bog the whole effort down. At most, use them to add a simple yet unusual element or two to your scenarios.

#### Scenario Samples:

Let's just leave it at one..."Dogs of War [TOT45]"...which contains nearly every idea mentioned above.

#### **Hitting on all Cylinders**

Build OBs with scenario-enhancing, useful units. If a unit doesn't seem to get much play in playtesting or adds very little to the outcome...drop or replace it with something more useful. In addition, give units the opportunity to show off all of their abilities. Although some players may not think to use some of their units' abilities, at least give them the chance. You will broaden the tactical possibilities for your scenario and provide the opportunity for the truly savvy to dazzle their opponents with unusual tactics.

#### Maximizing their Potential

For the most part, I think the best examples can be found in early war scenarios or where sides are mismatched (ex: one side has tanks and the other side has only infantry) since these sort of scenarios tend to see every desperate kind of measure taken to eliminate the foe: MGs shooting to kill tanks; infantry leaping into CC with tanks; human waves; deliberate immobilization shots, etc. What follows are a few ideas for building up the usefulness of units.

- If you have PF, PSK or BAZ toting troops fighting infantry, give them some walls and buildings to shoot at.
- If you have light mortars, give them targets to shoot that aren't in buildings. If those mortars have SMOKE, give them a reason to use it (perhaps stone building targets are ok after all!)
- If you have troops with differing range factors, think about the advantages that will provide, given your map. 467s can be devastating out to 12 hexes in open terrain...especially against attacking 527s.
- If your playtesters never use the SMOKE rounds in their OBA modules, get rid of them. Especially if the scenario seems to be exciting enough without them!
- If you have tanks with Gyros, then give them some enemy tanks to blast on the run.
- If you have AA guns present, give them some aircraft to kill.
- If you want a few units to be Assault Engineers then make sure they have the opportunity to use their smoke grenades and +1CCV bonus.

Each of the following made me feel like I had to squeeze every erg of go-go juice out of my units to win..."Oh Joy! [J22]", "Khamsin [ASL37]" and "Grebbe End [J42]".

#### **Making it Easy**

Do your best to design ease of play into your scenarios. Ease of play? Think about how many counters need to be set out on the scenario card and how many overlays need to be dug (cut?) out. Then think about how lengthy your SSRs have become and how much they impact the basic rules. Finally, take a glance at how many pages of rules need to be reread in order to cover the special units/terrain/SSRs you've used to spice up the scenario. If you are looking at a big effort to accomplish all this, you may be overloading your design. Try to lighten it up. Not only will it help speed up the pre-game setup, it will probably also help speed up play later.

#### Less Can Be More

Let's say you include an AVRE, panji, caves, rice paddies, night and PTO in a single scenario. It's just too much to assimilate. You'll have players reading rules for an hour before play starts and then rereading them while they are playing to make sure they did things right. Pick one or two and you're doing fine.

#### The Lay of the Land

Unique board configurations make great scenarios. Try to make it simple for folks to set up their playing area. Flip half boards for a while to see if you can build your vision that way. If overlays are necessary, limit them to a handful...3 is a good number and try not to stack them too much. If you need to do some terrain transmutations, keep them simple and easy to remember....like woods are brush or streams don't exist. Players can follow that easily during play. Avoid transformations like "all hills higher than Level 1 are Level 1 and all brush on Board 3 is considered inherent terrain".

#### Minimize SSRs

Use SSRs to accomplish two things: 1) set the scene (terrain and weather stuff) and 2) flavor the stew (add minor but interesting changes to existing rules). Wholesale rules inventions and dramatic departures from established game mechanics should be avoided. With just a little creativity, most "dramatic effects" that you are trying to generate for "historical accuracy" can be duplicated using the existing rules. Need to show the impact of sporadic shelling throughout the playing area? Increase the SAN rather than writing some lengthy SSR describing some crazy offboard 1-hex OBA module or ART piece. (Hello, Holy Ground!) When in doubt, see if an SSR actually comes into play during playtesting...if folks forget it all the time or never need to use it...drop it!

#### Leaning Towers

Watch your counter density. For every counter in your OB, there will be 50-75% more in use on the board at any given time. Figure out the optimal density of counters per board (this can be large for DASL boards!) and try to keep at or below that number. Remember to factor in the need to take LOS checks (can you move those four stacks out of the way...?) and the time it takes to find particular units amidst the stacks. One idea to help with counter density is to simplify your OBs.



(“Instant Classic” Continued from page 8)

For example, can you get by with one type of infantry instead of two? Great! It eliminates the need to dig your 467s out of your piles of 447s during play. And yes, it is my gut feeling that the issue of counter density is one of the major factors keeping tournament-sized scenarios as popular as they are.

#### Scenario Samples:

I found these scenarios very easy to play...“Blockbusters [A115]”, “Forest Fighting in Latvia [SP24]” and “Totsugeki [A60]”.

#### **That Fevered Pitch**

Building tension into a scenario is a great way to build excitement. There are a number of ways to influence tension including game length, the playing area, Fog of War and difficult trade-offs. The trick is to balance tension against the other elements that make your scenario interesting.

#### Game Length

Giving players fewer turns to accomplish their goals tends to build up the pressure. However, this sort of tension enhancer can backfire if folks feel their tactical choices are restricted given the time they have to do things.

#### Playing Area

Do a walk through with the forces of each OB. See how long it takes to get from one place to another on your playing area. Check out LOS to those moving troops. Are they able to get to where they need to go given the time you've allowed and the terrain to be crossed? Will they be able to move under cover or under fire? If you find that troops spend a turn or two moving towards the enemy out of LOS, then you need to find a way to get them closer to the action. Maybe the playing area is too big. Similarly, if you find troops have to slog through high MF turn after turn...well, that can be less than thrilling, too. I like to see troops in action as quickly as possible and I am perfectly content to trim the playing area to accomplish this. I am also happy to change the playing area if the same route seems to be used over and over during play-testing as “the” way to win.

#### Fog of War

The unknown is a terrific source of tension and excitement in a scenario. HIP units, concealment, variable OBs, variable VCs and a variety of setup options for key units (hmmm...one hex of concealment terrain in the setup area...I wonder where the HIP gun is...) can really crank up the anxiety. But don't go overboard. There is always a fine line between tension and irritation. Let's face it, if you are fighting a completely HIP force of Japanese in PTO terrain at night...things can be a bit...much. Tense? Sure...but it feels more like shock treatment than excitement after the third ambush. Kinda like the difference between the first Alien movie and all the others... I am a big fan of variable OBs, though these tend to become less “Foggy” in short order. I also think that a few HIPsters and some concealment can add a nice bit of zip to a scenario, especially if you are able to hide anti-tank weapons (Guns, BAZ, PSK) and fortifications.

#### Tough Choices

The last sort of tension that Classic scenarios often exhibit is

the tension involved in making hard decisions. The best examples of this are variable OBs, variable VCs and flexible setup options. Choosing between a 10-2 leader and a 447 squad in a variable OB is likely to generate no angst whatsoever. Making a choice between a few elite squads and a small horde of conscripts may be much more difficult. Having a single VC location to achieve victory is a straightforward proposition for both players. Set up three possible VC locations and require the winner to occupy two and you just stepped up everyone's pulse a notch or two. Limited set up areas tend to downplay both tension and replay value. For example, if you have only one hex of concealment terrain with decent LOS in your setup area, players will tend to hide their gun there every time. Take another look and find a way to give the player more options...perhaps overlays, a new board or an SSR allowing HIP anywhere...and the player will have a tougher decision to make regarding his gun.

#### Scenario Samples:

OK, you knew I'd throw in a shameless plug at some point... the scenarios of Melee Pack I are all good examples of scenarios that create tension.

#### **Final Thoughts**

So you've thought about things carefully and designed a terrific scenario. Ready for the acid test? Try answering the following questions about your new baby...and be honest!

Is it fun?  
Is it unpredictable?  
Is it unique?  
Is it tense and exciting?  
Is it forgiving of mistakes?  
Is it easy to set up?  
Is it quick to play?  
Is it balanced?  
Is it challenging for both sides?  
Would you play it again?

10 answers “yes” and you just might have an Instant Classic!

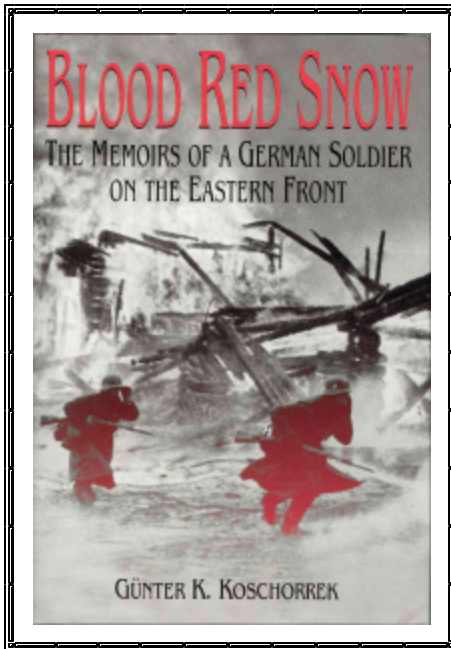
### **Words That Echo...**

“The roar increases and then reverberates from the walls. Slowly a huge object hauls itself along the floor of the *Rachel*. It is nearly as big as a house, and it has a long barrel poking out the front of it.”

*Panzergranadier Günter Koschorrek's first sighting of a “Ferdinand” PzJg Tiger. Dnyeprovka, Russia, November 23, 1943*

# Book Review: Blood Red Snow

by Matt Cicero



ISBN: 0-7394-3071-8

Blood Red Snow: The Memoirs of a German Soldier on the Eastern Front is an interesting first-hand account of Günter K. Koschorrek's journey as a heavy machine-gunner on the southern front from October 18, 1942 to June of 1945. During the war, Koschorrek captured his daily thoughts, feelings and observations in a personal diary. Keeping a diary was strictly forbidden in the Wehrmacht and so Koschorrek was forced to jot his notes on scraps of paper and hide them in the lining of his clothing. When he would visit home on leave or in hospital, he would transfer the notes to his family for safe keeping. The notes, to his great dismay, were lost. Long after the war's end and through an interesting turn of events, Koschorrek's diary was found again and it was then he organized them into this book.

The narrative provides a very intimate picture of a soldier's thoughts in the midst of war. How he felt about his squad-mates, his commanders, his equipment, the enemy, his duty and the war is made clear. This is a story told from the heart and it is abundantly clear when Koschorrek is excited, sad, terrified or relieved.

The daily updates provide a wonderful continuity and a clarity of the events as they occurred, un-blurred by the passage of time. When he fights, he describes the fighting in great detail. The vehicles, guns and men involved come to life and the soldiers, both enemy and ally, seem all too real. When awaiting battle, you learn a great deal about him and his mates. You see how they lived and how they joked. You find out about their interaction with the local Russians. You learn a lot about food and daily hygiene on the Eastern Front. The daily information provides details often lacking in other first person narratives.

Koschorrek also provides enough basic information, through maps and brief descriptions, for the reader to determine where the various actions took place and the German units involved. In fact, the battle descriptions are some of the most coherent and detailed I've read in a novel from World War II. I would consider this an excellent source for scenario ideas across a wide variety of circumstances. What makes this even more interesting is the fact that Koschorrek was often integrated into ad hoc commands during the long retreat from Stalingrad. As a result, he fought beside AT guns, AA Guns, mortar crews, pioneers with satchel charges, flammpanzers and even a few Ferdinands. His descriptions of the weather and the terrain are very helpful. If only some details of the enemy's formations were available....

Blood Red Snow carries the reader to Stalingrad and back with the majority of the novel taking place during the long series of defensive actions in 1943 and 1944. Koschorrek has done a great

*Special thanks to Scott Thompson for not only pointing this book out to me, but also for letting me borrow his copy!*



Günter K. Koschorrek was a machine-gunner on the Russian front in WWII. He lives in Germany, having retired from his job as managing director of a sales company.

## The Rock

by Matt Cicero

Here's a little something that might spice up your club or tournament competition...

The Rock is a game of ASL "tag". Pick a player in your gaming group and declare that he has the Rock. The first person to beat that person in an ASL game wins the Rock. The only restriction on Rock transfers is that you cannot immediately win the Rock back from the guy who just won it from you.

So think about it...you can set up The Rock for VASL play, for FtF play or at a Tourney. You can represent the Rock with just about anything from a flag to a crown to an email message listing all the previous holders. You can set a time limit or just keep the Rock moving within a group of people to see who gets it the most times or who defeats the most challenges. We started The Rock in the SoCal ASL Club as another excuse for our members to seek out and play folks they don't normally get a chance to play. Sean Geraghty has the Rock right now but the grapevine says he is being challenged as we speak in a playing of (you guessed it!) "The Rock [ASL68]". I'm waiting to here about the first VASL Rock...I'll bet that baby winds up in more than a few countries around the world!



# VASL 4 Installation Made Easy

by Matt Romey

## BACKGROUND

Most folks reading this newsletter have heard of "VASL"...the "program" that lets you play ASL across the internet with players all over the globe (or across town!). Some of you have downloaded at least one version of the software and visited the main room or maybe linked up with a game in progress to see what it is all about. A big group of ASLers use this software to play ASL over the internet when face-to-face competition is just not possible.

The "guts" of VASL is a program called VASSAL (described at <http://www.vassalengine.org/Overview.html>) created by SoCal President Emeritus, Rodney Kinney. The really amazing thing about the VASSAL engine is that it can power ANY wargame! Yup, Rodney developed this software to allow folks to create and play "modules" based on your favorite boardgames. *Panzer Leader*, *Stonewall Jackson's Way*, *Squad Leader* and a few others...oh, and of course ASL...are all available modules for VASSAL right now.

VASSAL and VASL have gone through a lot of development, getting better and faster. Given the changes and the fact that many of us are barely-computer-literate, downloading and setting up VASL has become...a hurdle. Well fear no more! Here I have pulled together the definitive VASL 4 Installation Instruction Guide. So read on and remember... when next you receive an email from your friend in East Jebbip (Cicero says that is East Coast Italian for "a place almost as far away as the moon") challenging you to a game of ASL, you won't have any excuses left!

## INSTALLATION OVERVIEW

First, let's quickly go over the various elements you will need to get VASL to work. The VASSAL engine is a program written in the Java programming language. For your computer to understand the Java language, you have to download an application called a Java Runtime Environment, or JRE. VASSAL will then run inside this JRE program. When you open VASSAL you will then load a particular module to play (such as the *vasl.mod* for ASL play). Finally, since the ASL boards (and overlays) are separate files, you'll need to download them as well. In summary...

### Download List

1. JRE
2. VASSAL\*
3. VASL module\*
4. Boards and Overlays

\* (NOTE: AS OF MAY, 2003 VASSAL AND VASL CAN BE INSTALLED SIMULTANEOUSLY USING THE VASL4 INSTALLER. IT IS STILL IMPORTANT FOR ME TO EXPLAIN THAT THEY ARE TWO SEPARATE THINGS, THUS I HAVE LISTED THEM SEPARATELY ABOVE.)

Wow. Sounds complicated. Fortunately, they've made it pretty simple to install, and this document is here to lend a hand.

## INSTALLATION PROCEDURE

### Steps 1-3: INSTALL THE JRE, THE VASSAL ENGINE, AND THE VASL MODULE.

- a. Download the following file to any convenient folder:  
[http://www.vasl.org/VASL4/install\\_VASL.exe](http://www.vasl.org/VASL4/install_VASL.exe)

- b. You can run it right away or you can save it and double-click on it later to start it... but if you save it, be sure to remember where you put it.
- c. Once you do start it, it will load for a bit, then an Introduction screen will appear. Click 'Next.'
- d. The screen will ask you where to install the program files. Choose the default setting ("C:\Program Files\VASL"), which will create a folder as indicated. Click 'Next'. (See the Screen Shot on Page 12)
- e. The next screen will ask you where you would like to create product icons. Just choose the default setting, "In an existing program group", with the selection 'VASL'. Click 'Next'.
- f. Click 'Install' and it will finish installing. Click 'Done' when finished.

### Step 4: DOWNLOAD THE BOARDS AND OVERLAYS

- a. The boards are big files, so they are separated into groups of 10 boards per file. You will need to download 5 or more files in all but every map and overlay file downloads and extracts in the same manner. You will need WinZip, or an equivalent file compression program (most computers have these nowadays).
- b. Go to <http://www.vasl.org/boards.htm>. Click on the file links to download (Ex: "bd1-10.zip"). You can open them directly or save them - saving is usually more reliable. If you save them, be sure to remember the directory into which you put them.
- c. The files that you download are Zip files; that is, each file has compressed files inside which are the files you actually want. To access the files inside, rightclick on the Zip file (Ex: bd1-10.zip), and select 'Open with \_\_\_\_\_' WinZip or whatever compression program you are using. Once it opens, you will see a number of files inside (Ex: bd1, bd2, etc.).
- d. Select all the files inside using the 'Shift' key and the left mouse button (select the top file, hold 'Shift' and click the bottom file - they should all highlight).
- e. Click the 'Extract' button. A window will come up that will ask you where you want to extract the files. In the 'Extract to:' field, input 'C:\Program Files\VASL\boards', and click the 'Extract' button.
- f. It is **\*VERY\*** important that you extract all the board and overlay files into the 'C:\Program Files\VASL\boards' directory. i.e., when you click the 'Extract' icon, type 'C:\Program Files\VASL\boards' into the 'Extract to:' field. Note the '\boards' at the end.
- g. Using 'My computer' or 'Explorer' check that the boards are in the 'C:\Program Files\VASL\boards' directory'. They will be files like 'bd10', 'bd32', etc. If they are not there, VASL will not work properly. (See the Screen Shot on Page 13)
- h. Re-read step g., and make sure that you did it right. **\*\*\*Putting the boards into the wrong directory is the most common problem with VASL installation\*\*\*.**
- i. Download the overlays. The overlay files are grouped into common types, e.g. standard, ocean, desert, third-party, etc. Download each one that you want, and extract them as explained in step 4a-e. NOTE: for this to work right you need to check the box 'Use folder names' in the 'Extract' window of WinZip.

(Continued on page 12)



("VASL4" Continued from page 11)

- j. There are a bunch of historical maps too, downloaded in the same way as the boards. You do not need to download all or even any of them - but how could you live without Red Barri-  
cades? :-)

#### Step 5: FINAL STEPS

- a. To run VASL4, go to 'C:\Program Files\VASL' directory using 'My Computer'. Double click on the VASSAL file (.exe, or gui, or whatever). A window titled 'VASSAL Module Editor' will appear. Click 'Play module' and select vasl.mod. This will open VASL4.
- b. VERY IMPORTANT FINAL STEP!!! On the window titled 'VASL Controls' click 'File', 'Edit Preferences'. A window will come up - click the 'General' tab. In the space called 'Board Directory' make sure it says 'C:\Program Files\VASL\boards', with no quotes. Hit 'Ok' and it should work. (See the Screen Shot on Page 13 for an example of the settings)
- c. If you have problems with the display, try decreasing the number of colors in your monitor display (right click the desktop, 'Properties', 'Settings', 'Colors').
- d. If you have any additional questions, feel free to email me at: [ChallengeCup@socalasl.com](mailto:ChallengeCup@socalasl.com)

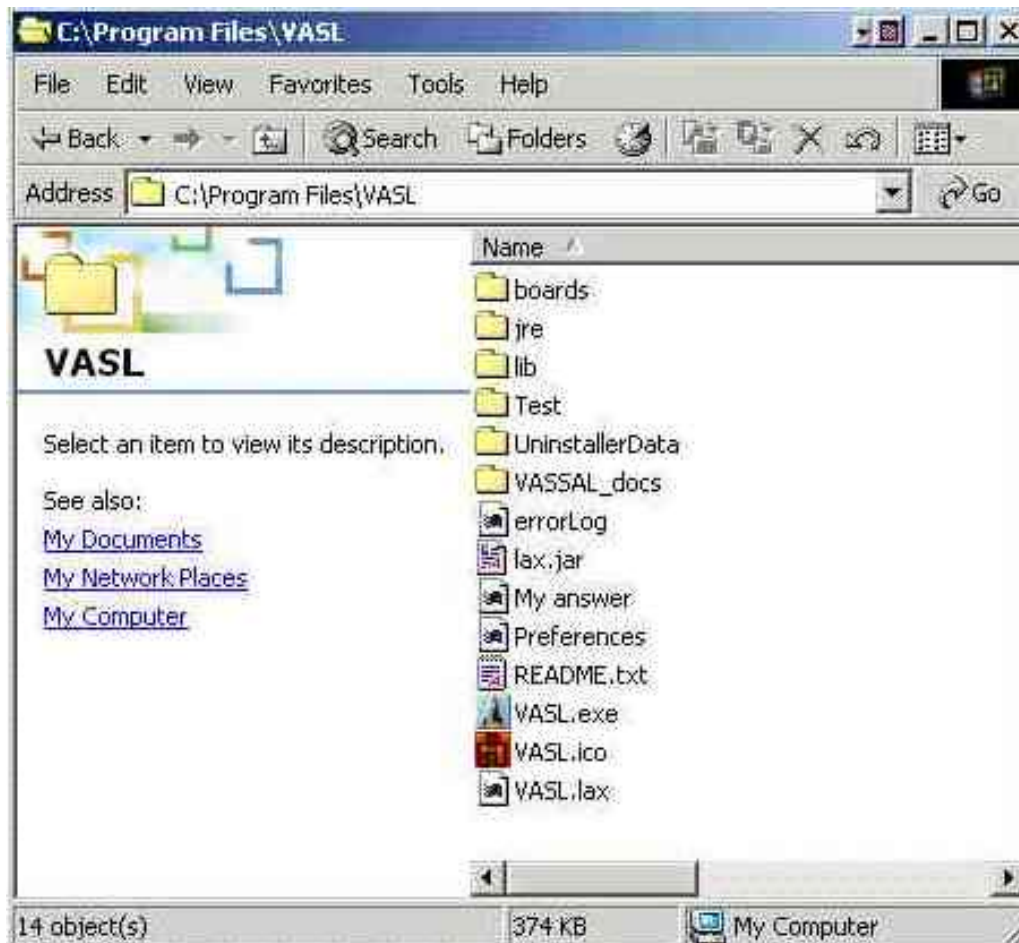
#### Appendix: UPDATES

Periodically, Rodney will update VASSAL and/or VASL. When these update are posted, you'll need to update your own downloaded version. Sometimes these updates change the way folks interact in VASL so having an older version might give you problems. It is best to update.

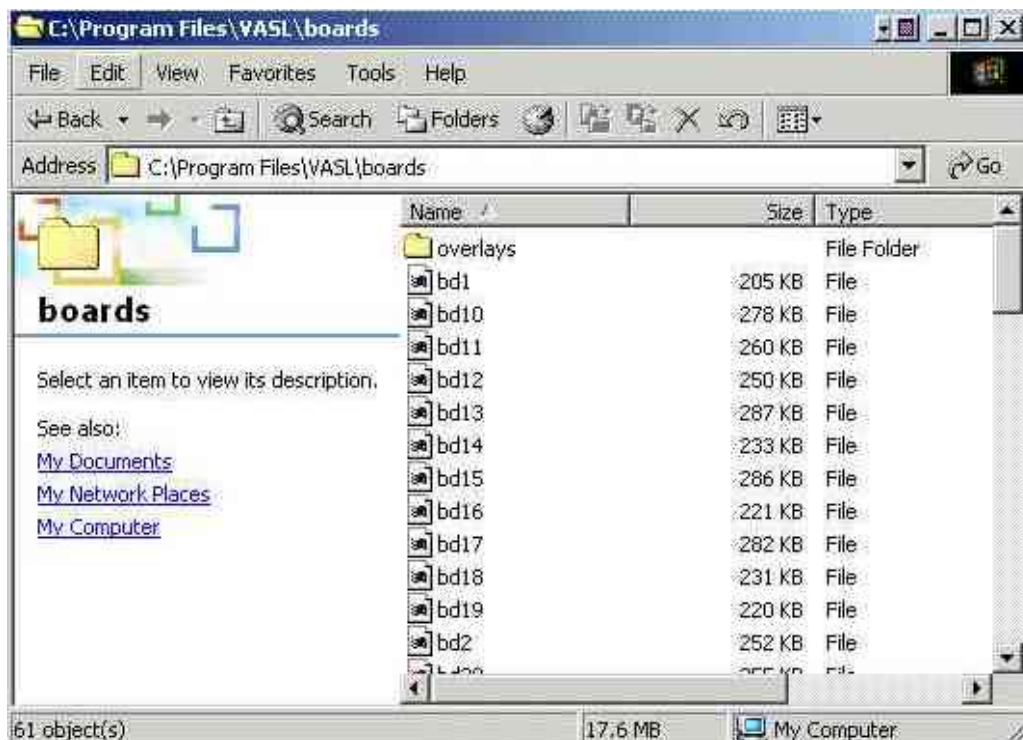
From RK himself: "Updates come in two flavors. Updates to the VASSAL engine come in the form of a new VASSAL.jar file. Updates to the VASL module come in the form of a new VASL.mod file. Both live in 'C:\Program Files\VASL\lib'. An update is a Zip file containing a new VASSAL.jar, a new VASL.mod file, or both. Move the old versions of the files to a different location in case you make a mistake. Then, move the new versions in. The 'About' screen in the Help menu will list both the VASSAL engine version and the VASL module version."

Simply put: download the update's Zip file from: <http://www.vasl.org/VASL4/VASL4.zip>. Open it with WinZip and Extract the 'VASSAL.jar' and the 'VASL.mod' files to the 'C:\Program Files\VASL\lib' directory. That completes the update.

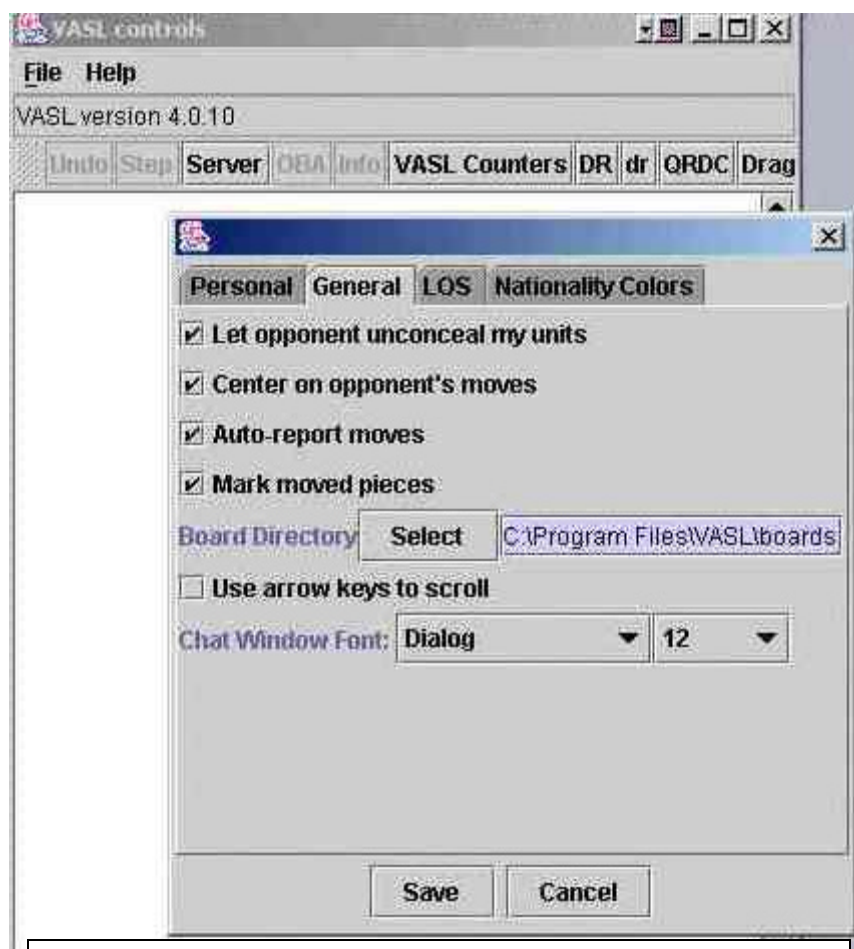
That's it! Now all you need is an opponent or two and you will be VASLing like a pro in no time.



**What the C:\Program Files\VASL\ directory should look like, with the VASL icon selected.**



*What the C:\Program Files\VASL\boards\ directory should look like.*



*What to put into the "Boards" field in the preferences section.*

ers (including a free copy of our "7-0 Pack" for all new player attendees).

Then there's our Newsletter. I can safely say *Hit the Beach!* is the best ASL club publication out there. Again, we give them more bang-for-the-buck in terms of size, the quality and variety of the articles and the layout and editing. We have had players join our Club after reading our back issues!

Our Club organization is getting a lot of recognition also. Our "New Player Outreach Program" utilizing the Regional Directors, our executive committee of Club Officers and written by-laws have all been firsts in the ASL scene. We've even gotten a few requests for information from some other clubs who are thinking about setting up something similar.

Most recently, we've put out a first-class scenario pack, *Melee Pack I*. Both its visual presentation and its content, IMO, are as good if not better than anything being produced today. The Melee Pack is getting nothing but great reviews. Not bad for a first effort. Wait until they see *Melee Pack II* !

There are two things I know for certain. First, ASLers everywhere know who we are. Second, there isn't a better place in the world to be an ASL player right now. Trust me. I hope you've all had a great summer. Our next Club event will be our Fall One Day Tournament, to be held at my office in beautiful downtown Escondido on November 15th. The theme will be 10-morale leaders. The Club will host a pizza and beer party in the evening. I hope to see you all there.

President@socalasl.com

**HTBI: What do you think about DY0? Ever tried it?**

**RS:** I am a big fan of DY0. A couple of years ago the club had a big DY0 tourney at Matt C's, and it was one of the best ASL events I've attended. I remember in the first round (an assault on the Central Railway Station in Stalingrad), the options for the German player didn't seem all that inspiring...except for upgrading a leader. So I upgraded my best leader all the way up to 10-3, and proceeded to clear the board of all Russian resistance. I think the other players took note, because in the second round, almost everyone took a 10-3...

**HTBI: CG versus one-shot games...any preference?**

**RS:** For me, variety is the best aspect of this game. So the idea of playing on the same battlefield, with the same forces, over, and over, and over...and over....doesn't have that big an appeal for me. I don't see doing a Red Barricades CG again any time soon, but I could be talked into smaller CGs from the other historical modules.

**HTBI: Best ASL experience...**

**RS:** So many to choose from.... Second runner up: "Shanghai In Flames [A110]", playing as the Japanese. Moved my "amoeba" force out on the first turn and during the Advancing Fire Phase, managed a "one-shot encirclement" against a Chinese stack. First runner up: winning a game of the original "Pegasus Bridge [G11]" scenario as the British with a combination of an all out charge and some lucky CC dice...and later finding out that the Germans are favored something like 12 to 1. Best Moment Finalist: against Eric V. in "The Weigh-In [J25]", my Poles against his Germans. Eric manages to get 3 AFVs in the CA of one of my 37L AT guns. During my DFPh, I miss with no ROF. I intensive Fire and break the gun. During the Advance Phase, Eric advances 2 HSs onto my gun crew. In CC, the crew survives and kills both HSs. In the following Rally Phase, I manage to repair the gun... and in the Prep Fire Phase, the gun kills all 3 tanks in its CA. 1 crew, scoring 17 CVP!

**HTBI: Worst ASL experience...**

**RS:** Again, so many.... Second runner up: Playing "The Price of Impatience [A6]" as the Partisans. When I drop my HIP status to ambush the German column the only result I get is a PTC against one squad... which passed! Needless to say, I was pretty well hosed from there.... First runner up: Watching a Matilda blow up from a Japanese TH hero even though the tank had 3 (!) squads escorting it! (thanks Eric!) Worst

Moment Finalist: Red Barricades campaign....Bryan Earll and I playing the Russians against Matt C. and Paul Simonsen as Germans. In one turn I initiated 5 close combats, each with odds for ambush in my favor (one even had a +3 differential!)...I manage to ambush nothing and lose all 5 CCs...

**HTBI: What Would You Like To Try Next?**

**RS:** There is so much in the game system I haven't tried. I'd like to get more desert scenarios played. I'd like to try more of the scenarios from the historical modules. And I would like to get some scenarios designed (there's at least 2 more in the works for Ecuador and Peru).

**HTBI: How could the game be better?**

**RS:** First, I'd like to see the "basic" system finished (i.e. Armies of Oblivion and Haakke Paalle). Second, the game can be so good for portraying plausible "what ifs". I'd like to see scenarios that come under the category of "well, this didn't actually happen...but it could have". I think DY0 "scenarios" (where each side is given their mission and a set number of points to spend) would be good also. Finally, I would like to see our club get even bigger. New blood is always welcome.

**HTBI: Top 3 things You'd Recommend For Playing ASL?**

**RS:** 1. Know your Rulebook! The player that wins is usually the player that knows the obscure rules reference buried in a forgotten place. Even if you don't know every rule by heart, at least know where to look so you can find it quickly.

2. Be willing to try anything. Don't be afraid of trying desert, or PTO, or early war. Sometimes you can learn tactics that can be applied to "regular" scenarios.

3. Keep current with the game. Read the articles in those Journals/Annuals. Leaf through an old General magazine occasionally. Those articles can have good advice and tips that you can spring on an unwary opponent.

**HTBI: Any Final Comments?**

**RS:** The SoCal ASL Club, with its newsletters, regular events, quality players, and now the Melee Packs, has got to be the best thing to happen to the ASL community in a long time. I'm proud to say that I'm a member of such a group.

Thanks Rob!



## Did you Know? "Those Sneaky Gits" by Matt Cicero

CC phase is upon you and your concealed 467 hiding in the woods has been advanced upon by a concealed 527 squad bent on mayhem. You grab your dice and hope for the best. But wait...have you considered all your options?

Consider this. You lose concealment in CC under three circumstances (A11.19): 1) you are ambushed in CC; 2) you make/direct an attack in CC (EXC: per A11.4, if you ambush your opponent, you retain concealment so long as you eliminate/capture the defending units); or 3) you are casualty reduced in CC (A11.19). Per A12.13, we know that CC attacks, are halved versus concealed units. Per A11.15, a unit which retains its concealment is not locked in melee nor does it lock its opponent in melee AND it may fire into the melee at TPBF in the following PFPh or move away freely in the MPh or APH.

So what does it all mean for our 467? More options...

The 467 could attack in CC. Assuming both units attack, the 467 can take his 1:2 odds shot and lose concealment. The 527 will return the favor at 1:1 odds. Not a very good exchange. Even if the 467 ambushes the 527 (forcing the 527 to lose its concealment), he will need a 5 to casualty reduce and a 4 to kill the 527 (and retain concealment) and gets first shot sequentially. The 527 will need a 4 to CR and a 3 to kill thanks to the +1 ambush modifier at 1:1 odds. The 467 could also use ambush withdrawal to avoid CC and to retain concealment or even withdraw after attacking (and avoid melee). Either way, the 467 will have a PBF shot in the next PFPh at 8+1.

The 467 could also stay concealed. The 527 will get its attack (and lose concealment) at 1:2 (thanks to the 467's concealment). He needs a 4 to CR and a 3 to kill. Any other result allows the 467 to retain concealment (and therefore avoid being locked in melee and so be able to shoot or move freely next turn). If the 467 ambushes the 527, the 527 loses its concealment. The 467 can then choose to withdraw before or after the 527's attack (and retain concealment). The 467 could also choose to stay in the hex (and take the 527's CC attack) in order to take a 12+1 attack against the 527 in the next PFPh, thanks to TPBF. Just imagine how this option would work if the 467 was carrying a lmg...20+1... Of course, the 527, being concealed when it advanced in, has the same options...

There may be times when tying up an opponent in melee is critical...and there may be times when avoiding delay or casualties makes melee undesirable. Now you have an idea or two to help you in either situation.

**SWEET!...OUCH!** ...sometimes one guy has all the luck. It just so happens that Eric Morton is NOT that guy...

### Eric's Story...

During an ABtF campaign game, one of Eric Morton's squads, reduced to a Walking Wounded, nevertheless gets HOB and goes Berserk. Limping and dripping blood and dragging each other onward, the pathetic squad steps out into the street and is vaporized by the multiple 30+ shots that descended upon it.

### Eric's Other Story...

Eric Morton and I were PT-ing a scenario when, at the end, my kill stack (9-2, 548/HMG, 247/HMG, 247/HMG) drew a bead on his last surviving stack of units (8-1, 546, Green HS).

### First Shot:

24FP: Roll 3, yields a 3MC. Green HS Disrupts; 8-1 Breaks, ELRs and Wounds on a 12; 546 HOB: Battle Hardens, Generates a Hero.

### Second Shot:

20FP: Roll 2, yields a 1KIA. 546 gets the KIA; Green HS dies; Wounded 8-1 survives 2nd Wound; Hero Breaks and dies of wounds.

### Third Shot:

20FP: Roll 2, yields a 1KIA. 8-1 Leader vaporizes; game over.

*Hey Eric, got time for a game? -ed.*



### Upcoming Events...

11/15/03: Fall "Big Men on Campus" One-Day  
11/29/03: *Hit The Beach!* V8N4  
11/29/03: Pre-Registration Packs for WCM VII  
Become Available

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### Credits

Koschorrek, Ginter K., *Blood Red Snow*, Greenhill Books, London, 2002. ISBN: 0-7394-3071-8.

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